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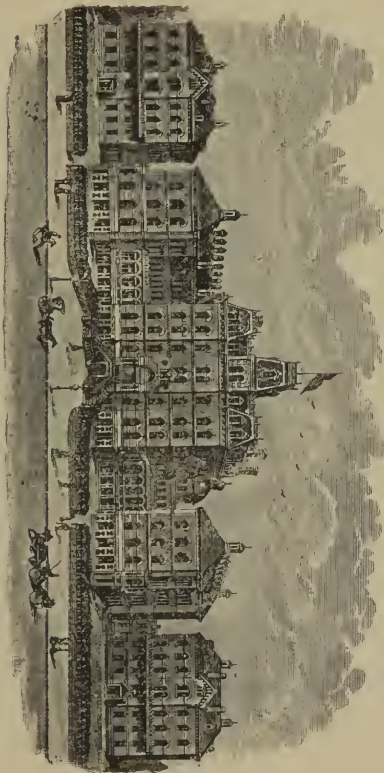
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FRONT VIEW, SIXTY-EIGHTH STREET.



NEW YORK FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

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JUN 27 1962

* To the Friends *

of the Little Ones, whose names are
associated with a great work, but,
whose countless deeds of tender
charity are known only to God and
the Holy Angels. * * *

Feast of the Guardian Angels, 1894.

" See that ye despise not one of these little ones," was the admonition of the Divine Master, for from the earliest days there have been hapless infants, the victims of poverty or sin, who enter this cold world without a welcome, to be rudely thrust out of it by those who gave them birth, or condemned by them to the horrors of exposure and a probable lingering death. In obedience to the command of her Spouse, the Church at once stretched out her loving arms to receive and shelter the little deserted ones, founding hospitals and making laws for their maintenance, and in the 17th century, the great Apostle of charity, St. Vincent de Paul, devoted his own energies and influence to their preservation, and bequeathed them forever to the loving care of his Daughters. When this city became a haven for the representatives of every nation, and sin and suffering followed them to its doors, the same touching manifestations of self-sacrifice developed

here, which, in the early days of Christianity drew from the lips of pagans, the wondering comment : See how these Christians love one another ; Hospitals were opened ; orphans gathered into homes ; the aged, patiently tended by those who had left father and mother at the call of Christ ; prisoners were consoled ; the poor visited and relieved. But, in this generous outpouring of Christ-like compassion, one class of sufferers seemed to be overlooked—the most pitiful of all silent sufferers, incapable of pleading for their own relief, innocent, yet paying the penalty for the sins of others—the Foundlings alone were unprovided for.

Twenty-five years ago, scarcely a morning passed without its being recorded in the daily journals that the body of a new-born babe had been found floating near the docks, buried in an ash barrel or flung in some lonely area. Each day, an armful of little unfortunates, picked up by the police on their night beats, were carried to the Almshouse on Blackwell's Island, to be bottle-fed by the aged paupers, rarely surviving their infancy. In view of these sad facts, it occurred to many charitable persons to employ in New York, for the preservation of Foundlings, the same means, which for

centuries past in the old world had so effectually met this dire need—viz. : to open an asylum for their reception ; and it was suggested to the Sisters of Charity that this work, so dear to the heart of St. Vincent de Paul, might be appropriately undertaken by them. Recognizing its difficulty and doubtful of public sympathy and support, the Sisters hesitated, but, it would seem as if while their fate was hanging in the balance, the little waifs made mute appeals for protection, for about this time, it not unfrequently happened that infants were left at the doors of mission houses or on the steps of neighboring churches, and the Sisters, without means of providing for them, were obliged to transfer them to the Almshouse.

The Archbishop of New York, afterwards His Eminence Cardinal McCloskey, who was keenly alive to every want of his diocese, urged upon the Sisters, the duty of saving these little deserted ones, and in obedience to his wish and the promptings of divine charity, the great work was finally undertaken. Three Sisters were appointed for the new mission, under the charge of Sister M. Irene, who, having been for many years the superior of a house in one of the crowded

districts, was familiar with the wants of the poor and had often pleaded the cause of the little ones, some of whom had been abandoned at her door. Mother M. Jerome, in giving her the charge, said impressively: Let this be the work of Divine Providence—if it be pleasing to Almighty God, He will sustain it.

As a preparation for her responsible task, Sister Irene visited the Infant Asylums, already in successful operation on a small scale, in Baltimore and Washington, gaining full information upon the details of their administration, and also consulted the records of similar institutions in the Old World; yet experience proved the better teacher, and her work, as it gradually developed, bore the impress of originality and a wise adaptation of arbitrary laws to the needs and demands of the present day. The next step was to issue an appeal for help as the resources of the prospective Asylum were only five dollars received from Mother Jerome. It is related in the life of St. Teresa, that she once set out to make a foundation with five pennies in her pocket, remarking with her usual naïveté—Five pennies and Teresa do not amount to much; but five

pennies, Teresa and God can accomplish wonders. So it proved in this case—Almighty God sent to the aid of the Sisters a band of earnest, devoted women; for the appeal touched those chords of the human heart which vibrate to the cries of suffering infancy—it was essentially a woman's work and nobly did the women of New York apply themselves to it.

Mrs. Paul Thebaud at once placed at the Sister's disposal herself and her carriage for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions, introducing Sister Irene to a circle of influential friends. A Ladies' Society was soon organized, and this sketch would be incomplete without the names of those, who were as the foundation stones in the great edifice which has grown slowly to completion during these twenty-five years.

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MISS WADSWORTH.

“ JENNIE BLAINE.

“ CAROLIN.

“ M. E. GLOVER.

“ A. LEARY.

“ O’REILLY.

“ A. D. SMITH.

“ ROUX.

“ DOHERTY.

Inspired with courage and confidence by the active co-operation of the Ladies’ Society, the Sisters at once rented a small house at 17 East 12th St., and there, on the 11th of October, 1869, the New York Foundling Asylum was formally opened.

The first infant was left the same day about dusk and was surveyed with wonder and pity by the Sisters, who decided that it should be called Joseph Vincent ; what was their disappointment to discover a scrap of paper, pinned to its clothing saying that its name was Sarah

H. Another was found on the stoop during the night, in spite of the rain that was falling in torrents, and within a month the number reached forty-five—the house was full. “But where did the money come from to carry on such a work?” This we are often asked and persons nowadays are amazed to hear of a lecture (Hon. S. S. Cox) which brought in \$10,000. Two Matinees (Mr. Augustin Daly), realizing respectively, \$5,000 and \$10,000. A Subscription Ball, gotten up by Mr. Dennis O’Donoghue, the proceeds of which amounted to \$6,500. There were princely gifts beside \$10,000 from Mr. Louis White, \$5,000 from Mr. Ceballos, \$5,000 from Mr. Higgins and many others. ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000.

Divine Providence never fails those whose faith is unwavering, and in 1870 the Sisters were enabled to remove to more commodious and healthy quarters on Washington Square, with bright prospects for the future, for an appreciative Legislature inaugurated a scheme of aid and authorized the city to grant a site for an Asylum with an appropriation of \$100,000 on condition that a similar amount should be raised by subscription.

It is time for us now to speak of the generous personal assistance given to the Asylum by the gentlemen of New York, many of whom were associated with it from the beginning. First on the list of benefactors was Father, afterwards Monsignor Preston, in whose parish it opened, and who, besides assuming the spiritual direction, was present week after week at the meetings of the Ladies' Society, advising, encouraging, urging on the good work by example and influence. Next, Mr. John O'Brien, who at once took hold of the finances of the Asylum, his honorable name inspiring confidence, while his business ability increased the resources committed to his charge. Messrs. Develin and Miller offered their professional services to protect the legal interests of the new institution, and continued to be prudent counsellors and faithful friends. Mr. John D. Crimmins, who has throughout been an efficient aid and firm supporter of the Asylum. The health of the inmates of the Asylum was the object of the untiring solicitude of Drs. Thebaud and Reynolds. Day and night the latter was at the service of the Sisters, relieving them of a heavy burden of responsibility and teaching them the

practical care of the little ones. His disinterested kindness has been always most gratefully remembered. Among others who deserve honorable mention are

JOHN E. ALEXANDRE.	T. GLOVER BARRY.
JAMES A. BEALES.	R. P. CHARLES.
JOHN D. CRIMMINS.	BERNARD CASSERLY.
EDWARD L. DONNELLY.	JOHN FOX.
JAMES R. FLOYD.	ARTHUR LEARY.
WILLIAM LUMMIS.	PATRICK MALONE.
JOHN MURPHY.	JOHN MULLINS.
JOHN McNULTY.	CHARLES O'CONOR.
JOSEPH J. O'DONOHUE.	DENNIS O'DONOGHUE.
THOMAS H. O'CONNOR.	JEREMIAH QUINLAN.
JAMES REDMOND.	PAUL L. THEBAUD.
JOSEPH THORON.	JAMES WALLACE.

Under the auspices of this Committee of Gentlemen a Fair was organized, which was taken up energetically by the Clergy and the different City Parishes. Day after day a wagon with a huge bell, constantly tolling, passed through the streets of New York, reminding all to contribute to the preservation of the

little Foundlings. Mr. Joseph J. O'Donohue acted as Treasurer, and through his influence and exertions the Fair realized the large amount of \$71,500, which was made up to the sum required by several donations of \$1,000 and \$5,000 and \$21,500 collected personally by Mrs. R. Connolly.

Dark days intervened however before the massive buildings on 68th Street reached their present grand proportions; at one time the allowance per capita from the city was reduced, so as to fall far short of the expenditures, and the Sister Superior was obliged to borrow her car-fare when going to attend a meeting of the Board of Managers. It became absolutely necessary to diminish the number of admissions, even with the knowledge that death awaited the unfortunates who were refused, for cases of infanticide were again frequently reported. At this critical juncture a new Bill presented by Hon. John Fox had passed the Legislature, which established the finances of the Asylum on a secure footing; but the Governor's signature was delayed on account of strenuous opposition. Upon this signature the very existence of the Asylum depended, and as Gov. Dix chanced to be in the city,—the guest

of Mr. Thurlow Weed,—an interview was arranged which would give Sister Irene an opportunity to explain to him the urgency of the case and to plead the cause of the Foundlings. His Excellency was most kind, and listened like a father to the history of the work—the good already accomplished, and the sorrow all its friends would feel if now it were abandoned and the little ones again left to perish. “Trust me ; I will do for you all that I can,” was his consoling promise at the close, which sent the Sisters away with lightened hearts. But to secure the desired result, the matter was committed to the management of St. Joseph, who, having provided for the temporal wants of the Holy Child, would not be unmindful of the needs of His little ones. A pen was placed in the hand of the statue of the Saint in the Chapel, which he was besought to hold, until the Governor’s signature had been obtained.

Long and anxious were the days of waiting, yet fervent and confident prayers were addressed to the Father of the poor, through intercession of St. Joseph ; at last, one morning, when a number of sisters were assembled in the chapel, the pen dropped suddenly to the

floor, and within two hours a telegram was received from Albany :

“ I have signed your bill.

“ JOHN A. DIX.”

Shortly after the opening of the Asylum, a second branch of work, until then uncontemplated, forced itself upon the Sisters' attention. One day a young woman came with her baby, and pleaded not to leave it, but to be received into the house with it. As provision had been made for Foundlings only, she was refused. A few hours later the woman returned and renewed her entreaties, saying her friends had cast her off—she had no shelter for the night—might she not remain with her child? Money was given her for her present need, but once more she was refused admission. In the evening she came again, and said there was but one alternative—if the Sisters would not consent to take her, she would go and destroy herself—if they allowed her to stay with her child, she would work for them and nurse another baby with her own. These last words were a revelation—painful experience had taught that, with the most unwearied care and vigil-

ance, it was almost impossible to raise a number of infants by hand ; the babies would gain by this extension of the work, as well as the poor, homeless mothers. The girl, by her importunity, had opened a refuge for thousands, who since then have sought the shelter of the Asylum. It is the Sisters' aim to persuade all poor mothers, not hindered by family reasons, to enter and remain with their babies during the nursing period, and having made this reparation for their sin, and profited by the kindly influences around them, they go forth strengthened and encouraged to take up their life's work.

Side by side with this, another most important branch of the Asylum's work sprang into existence. Its temporary quarters were filled to overflowing, and as some outlet was necessary to avoid the evil of overcrowding, it was suggested that many poor women, who had lost their infants, would be glad to nurse one for a compensation, and thus add to their scanty income. A call for wet-nurses, inserted in the daily papers, was eagerly responded to, and in a few months' time, the Out Door Department was thoroughly organized. "Eleven hundred children out at nurse" is the won-

dering exclamation of visitors to the Asylum ; “ how is it possible to supervise such a number and make sure that all are kindly and properly cared for ? ” Ah ! they do not know what faithful guardians are watching over the interests of the little Foundlings. 1st. The detailed officer of the Asylum, whose duty it is to visit immediately each nurse to whom a baby has been committed, besides keeping a general surveillance over all. Seventeen years ago, he was appointed to the post which he has filled ever since, with honor and fidelity. 2d. The Members of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, who hold themselves responsible for the welfare of the little ones at nurse in their respective parishes, visiting them at stated intervals and reporting their condition. 3d. The appointed guardians of the children—the Sisters, who require each nurse to present herself with her little charge, on the first Wednesday of the month, when payment is made ; their experienced and vigilant eyes can quickly detect whether the little ones are thriving and well cared for. Above all, a kind Providence watches over these hapless ones, and whilst to secure for them the nourishment upon which their frail lives depend, a

certain amount of risk must be run, yet none have ever been known to suffer from cruelty or neglect.

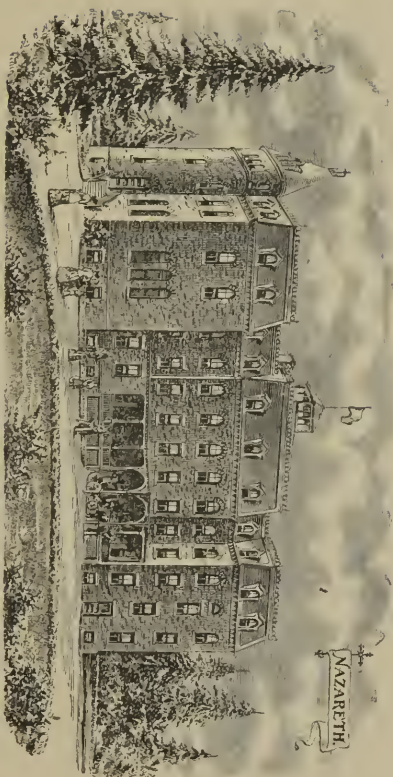
Years passed on in the history of the Foundling Asylum, and in spite of its prosperity, a great anxiety preyed upon the minds of the Sisters. What should they do with the children whose lives they had saved? The number was daily increasing, some had reached their eighth year, and the City Authorities were becoming alarmed lest the Institution should require a larger amount than the people would be willing to give. The question was solved by the rapid development of the fourth branch of the great work, placing the children in homes. An agent offered himself to the service of the Sisters and set forth to his task earnestly and intelligently, soon providing for the future of some two or three hundred little ones, principally in Maryland. It was a venture, and the Sisters sent tearfully and reluctantly to an untried future, those whom thus far they had cherished and protected. Faith sustained them then; now they can see, looking back in the light of the intervening years, the over-ruling Hand of Providence. They have drawn from the fate of these very children consolation and encouragement to continue their work

for others. Some of those first sent out have ended edifying lives with the grace of a happy death, some have been called by Almighty God to the highest of all destinies, whilst others are happy and useful in their humble sphere. Since then thousands have gone forth from the Asylum, and who can tell the joy they have carried with them to all those childless homes, the love that has been lavished by strangers upon those, who deserted by their own nearest and dearest became the little adopted ones of Divine Providence.

Still another branch of work was slowly maturing as the Asylum continued its career. In the buildings on 68th St. there were a few small, unoccupied rooms, in which the Sisters would sometimes receive a poor girl, on the eve of her confinement, who could find no other shelter. By degrees such applications became more frequent, the rooms were never vacant and many cases were refused who were worthy objects of charity. It was decided to build a Maternity Hospital on a corner of the Asylum block, which would serve the twofold purpose of shielding those whose character and family reputation were at stake, and also offer accommodations to married ladies, who could there receive the

constant medical attention and skilful nursing, which they could not so conveniently command in their own homes. St. Ann's Hospital receives yearly some two hundred patients, and has been the means of greatly advancing the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

On this, its 25th Anniversary, we have sketched briefly the origin and growth of the N. Y. Foundling Asylum, for the encouragement of those who have borne with us the burden of its vast responsibilities; the true friends, whose sympathy was our support in many dark hours, whose zeal was an incentive to redoubled efforts. When we tell them that they have been instrumental in saving 25,697 infants, and more than 5,000 poor mothers, we show results that should compensate them for the labor of twenty-five years; but the good that has actually been accomplished is known to God alone. Let them, for their reward, listen to the gracious promise which our Lord, as the Good Samaritan, addressed to all those who should in any way succor the friendless and suffering, "*Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest, I, at my return, will repay thee.*"



"NAZARETH."

THE COUNTRY BRANCH OF THE NEW YORK FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

